

★ How Well Do You Know The King of Rock 'n' Roll? ★

THE ELVIS TRIVIA BOOK



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THE ELVIS TRIVIA BOOK

How Well Do You Know
The King of Rock 'n' Roll?





CONTENTS

MAKING OF THE KING

Elvis sings and plays the guitar while recording in the studio, circa 1956.

6. INTRODUCTION: FACTS, FICTION AND FASCINATION

Fans have always wanted to know more about Elvis Presley

8. CHAPTER 1: BEFORE HE WAS FAMOUS

A rags to riches story

18. CHAPTER 2: THE SUN RECORD YEARS

A local label made Elvis a regional phenom

28. CHAPTER 3: HIS TV APPEARANCES

Television made Elvis a national sensation—and the source of controversy

38. CHAPTER 4: THE ARMY YEARS

At the peak of popularity, Elvis left show business to serve the country

48. CHAPTER 5: THE MOVIES

Elvis made a lot of films—and a lot of money—in Hollywood

58. CHAPTER 6: THE COMEBACK SPECIAL

In 1968, Elvis returned to TV and sparked a career revival

68. CHAPTER 7: GRACELAND

Elvis' home has stories of its own

78. CHAPTER 8: HIS HOBBIES

Elvis indulged many passions

88. CHAPTER 9: ELVIS IN VEGAS

What happened there did not always stay there—and became part of Elvis lore





FACTS, FICTION AND FASCINATION

Fans have always wanted to know more about Elvis Presley

From the moment Elvis Presley burst into the national spotlight in 1956, everyone has been curious about the man behind those dark, mysterious eyes. Almost immediately, a cottage industry emerged for magazines loaded with “new” pictures and covers that promised to reveal all the details: “How It Feels To Be Elvis”... “Presley’s Complete Life Story”... “Is Elvis Ready to Marry? Who Will He Wed?”

The words within—devoured by young people who loved Elvis’ brand of fresh, freeing and fiery new music—weren’t always revealing, or true. But they did become part of a mythology: an oral history shared by way of street corners and school hallways, through the passage of time and into American folklore.

The result: Everyone who is old enough to remember believes they know what Elvis Presley is all about. But how much do we really know about the man who became America’s king? From his childhood to his breakthrough to the songs and appearances that made him an icon, turn the pages and test your Elvis IQ.

TEEN HEARTTHROB

Since bursting onto the scene in 1956, Elvis Presley emerged as a rock ‘n’ roll icon. Here, Elvis signs autographs for his enthusiastic teenage fans.







Chapter 1

BEFORE HE WAS FAMOUS

A rags to riches story

FUTURE KING

From small-town boy to worldwide phenomenon, Elvis Presley's talent and charisma helped make him an icon.



WHERE WAS ELVIS PRESLEY BORN?

The King of Rock 'n' Roll was born on Jan. 8, 1935, in **Tupelo, Mississippi**. He was raised by parents Vernon and Gladys Presley in a narrow, two-room “shotgun” house that was built by his father, grandfather and uncle. The Presleys were surrounded by relatives, with many of Elvis’ uncles, aunts and cousins living in the area. But they only lived in that house until he was 3 years old, because the family couldn’t afford to keep up on the payments. They did stay in Tupelo for another three years after that, but they needed the help of friends, relatives and government assistance to stay afloat. They eventually left Tupelo for Memphis, but Elvis was never forgotten by the city where he was born. That original house, as well as the church his family attended, are now tourist attractions and museums.

MODEST UPBRINGING

Elvis (at left, age 3) was born in Tupelo, Mississippi. His original birth home is now a historic museum site.

RADIO WAVES

Elvis was a devoted fan of Mississippi Slim’s popular radio show on Tupelo’s local station, WELO.

BEFORE HE WAS FAMOUS

2:

WHO PUT ELVIS ON THE RADIO FOR THE FIRST TIME?

When Elvis was growing up in Tupelo, he was a devoted listener to **Mississippi Slim**’s radio show. Slim’s show was very popular, especially among kids, including Elvis’ friends. One of those friends was James, Slim’s brother, who took Elvis to the station to meet Slim. When Elvis was 12, Slim even invited him to perform live, on air. The first time, Elvis was struck by stage fright. But he returned the following week and performed. Slim was unimpressed, according to B.W. Ausborn, one of Slim’s cousins. “He said, ‘I didn’t think that boy would ever make anything,’” B.W. told the *Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal*. “But I’m glad he did.”



3:

TRUE OR FALSE: ELVIS COULD NOT READ MUSIC.

True. Though he was one of the greatest performers of all time, and was able to play the guitar, bass, piano, accordion and drums, Elvis never learned how to read the notes on a page of sheet music. He was taught chords and hand placement on instruments, and everything else came naturally. That's probably why, despite being credited as a writer on many of his hits, he once claimed, "I've never written a song in my life."

NATURAL TALENT

Elvis was not a formally trained musician and never learned to read music. He was a naturally gifted performer and could play songs by ear.



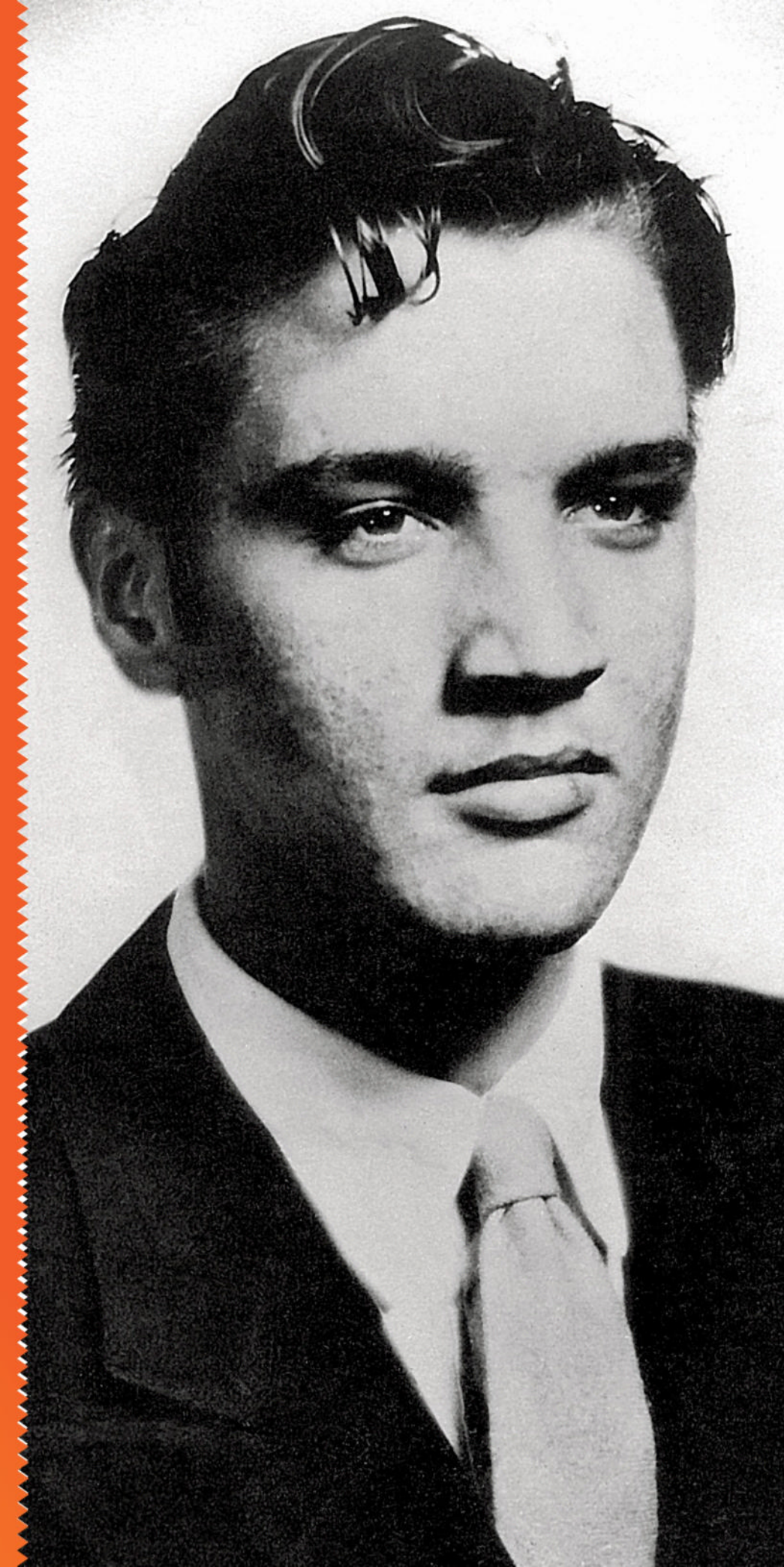
4.

TRUE OR FALSE: ELVIS WAS A TWIN.

True. Elvis had a twin brother, named Jessie Garon, who was born 35 minutes before Elvis arrived. Unfortunately, Jessie was stillborn, and was buried the next day in an unmarked grave in Priceville Cemetery. According to several biographies of Elvis' life, he was haunted by being a "twinless twin." Psychologists have said that's a normal response, that surviving twins often feel survivor's guilt even if the loss of their sibling came at birth. His mother, Gladys, had a different take on the tragedy. She believed Elvis was living life for both of them. "Elvis' destiny is to do great things," she reportedly said. "He is living for two people. He has the power of two people." Elvis eventually had a monument made for his brother and displayed it outside his Graceland mansion.

LONLEY BOY

Elvis' twin brother, Jessie Garon Presley, was stillborn, which haunted Elvis with survivor's guilt throughout his life.



**BEFORE
HE WAS
FAMOUS**

5:
**WHAT GRADE
DID ELVIS
RECEIVE IN
HIS EIGHTH
GRADE MUSIC
CLASS?**

Elvis received a **C** in music class. His teacher even questioned whether he really had the ability to sing. So to prove a point, according to one of his biographies, he brought his guitar to school and played and sang “Keep Them Cold Icy Fingers Off of Me” by the Stanley Brothers. His teacher remained unmoved. As a classmate later recalled, the teacher “agreed that Elvis was right when he said that she didn’t appreciate his kind of singing.”

6:

WHAT CRIME SENT ELVIS' FATHER TO JAIL?

Elvis' father, Vernon, was not a well-educated man, dropping out of school in the eighth grade. When he got older, he struggled to hold a steady job, bouncing around from employer to employer and showing very little ambition. Then, in 1938, things got worse. In the midst of the Great Depression, Vernon was found guilty of **forging a check** and spent eight months in Parchman Farm, a maximum security prison. He had sold a hog, but was paid only \$4 and believed he should have received more. So Vernon, Gladys' brother Travis Smith and a friend named Lether Gable hatched a scheme to forge the check to make up the difference. It was while Vernon was in prison that his family was unable to pay their bills and lost their house, forcing them to move in with relatives.

TRoubled Times

In 1938, Elvis' father, Vernon, was found guilty of forging a check and forced to spend eight months in the Mississippi State Penitentiary prison farm.





7:

WHERE WAS ELVIS' FIRST PUBLIC PERFORMANCE AS A SINGER?

Young Elvis was a shy boy, not very outgoing or popular. His teachers regarded him as an “average” student when he was in first grade at East Tupelo Consolidated School. But one day, during morning prayers, a teacher overheard him singing a country song called “Old Shep” by Red Foley. Impressed, she encouraged him to enter a singing contest at a local fair. So he did. On Oct. 3, 1945, a 10-year-old Elvis stepped onto the stage at the **Mississippi-Alabama Fair and Dairy show** to sing “Old Shep” in his very first public performance. Years later, he recalled that he placed fifth in the contest. His prize was \$5 in free tickets for rides at the fair.



8.

WHO TAUGHT ELVIS TO PLAY GUITAR?

On Elvis' 11th birthday, his mother gave him a new guitar that she purchased from Tupelo Hardware. According to some of his biographies, he was hoping for either a bicycle or a rifle. But he began enjoying the guitar immediately anyway. He bought a book that taught him how to place his fingers on the strings and took some lessons from his uncles. But his main teacher is widely credited as **Pastor Frank Smith**, one of his neighbors. Elvis would visit him often and the pastor would teach him chords he could use. In Peter Guralnick's comprehensive biography *Last Train to Memphis: The Rise of Elvis Presley*, Elvis is quoted as recalling that he mostly learned on his own. "I took the guitar and I watched people," he said. He also said that even though he "learned to play a little bit" he still wasn't ready to sing much in public. "I was very shy about it," he said.

COVER SONG

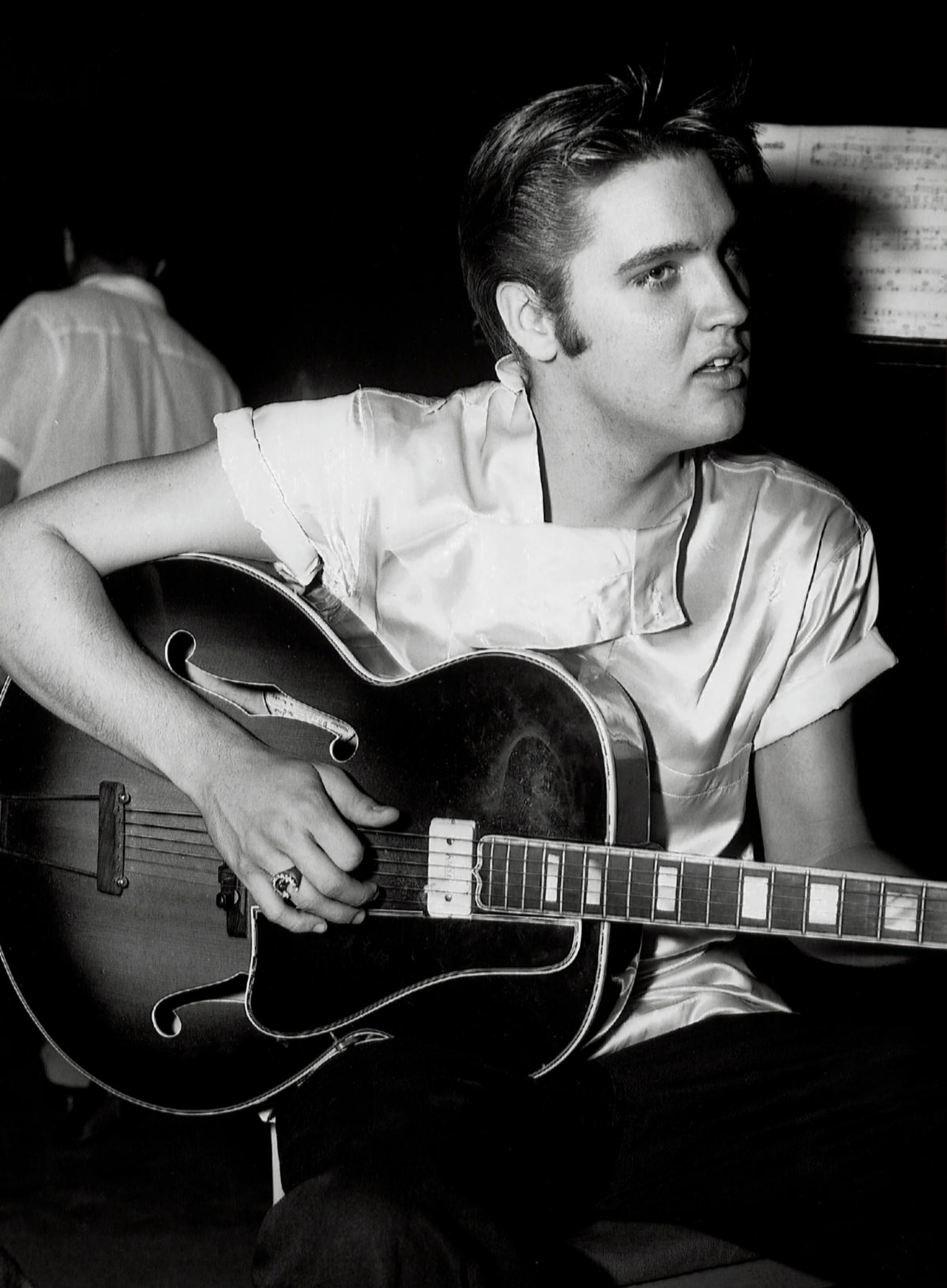
Elvis performed Teresa Brewer's 1952 hit, "Till I Waltz Again With You," during his high school's annual show his junior year.

9.

WHAT SONG DID ELVIS PERFORM AT HIS HIGH SCHOOL'S ANNUAL SHOW HIS JUNIOR YEAR?

As he got older, Elvis slowly began to get over his fear of performing. And by his junior year, he was ready to take the stage in front of his friends. On April 9, 1953, he sang "**Till I Waltz Again With You**" by Teresa Brewer. He placed 16th of the 22 acts that night, listed as "Elvis Presley" in the program. But his performance turned out to be life-changing. "I wasn't popular in school," he told one of his biographers. "I wasn't dating anybody. I failed music. And then they entered me in this talent show... It was amazing how popular I became in school after that."





Chapter 2

THE SUN RECORD YEARS

A local label made Elvis a
regional phenom

SUN TIMES

Sam Phillips' Memphis-based label Sun Records helped launch
Elvis Presley's career.



1.

HOW MUCH DID RCA VICTOR PAY FOR ELVIS' CONTRACT?

As Elvis' star began to skyrocket, it became clear that he was outgrowing Sam Phillips and Sun Records. That's when Phillips decided to try and sell the rights to Elvis and his music. Elvis' newly hired promoter, Colonel Tom Parker, stepped in and told Phillips to name his price. He demanded **\$40,000**—\$35,000, plus \$5,000 to pay back royalties he owed Elvis. Several companies were interested, but none were willing to pay more than \$25,000. Parker went to RCA and gave them two weeks to up their offer or Elvis would sign somewhere else. On Nov. 15, 1955, they did, and five days later the unprecedented deal was done.

BIG DEAL

Elvis Presley records a song in a studio at RCA Victor in 1956 (left). RCA Victor officially signed Elvis on Nov. 20, 1955, for \$40,000.



2:

WHAT TWO SONGS WERE ON ELVIS' FIRST RECORD?

When Elvis was 18 years old, in August 1953, he went to the Memphis Recording Service—which was owned by Sam Phillips, the founder of Sun Records—to record what he said was a birthday present for his mother. He spent \$3.98 and recorded two ballads: **“My Happiness”** and **“That’s When Your Heartaches Begin.”** Many believe Elvis wasn’t actually making a birthday present, but was hoping to impress Phillips, who wasn’t in the office that day. His assistant, Marion Keisker, handled the session, and was impressed enough to keep his name and number and note that Elvis was a “good ballad singer.”

3:

HOW MANY SONGS DID ELVIS RECORD FOR SUN RECORDS?

From July 1953 through November 1955, Elvis recorded at **least 24 songs** for Sun Records, 10 of which were released before Sun sold his contract. They ran the gamut from hillbilly music and gospel, to bluegrass and rhythm and blues. Elvis also recorded a studio session at Sun in 1956 with Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis and Johnny Cash. Together, they did all or parts of approximately 40 songs. That session became known as the Million Dollar Quartet, and the recording was finally released in the U.S. in 1990.

MUSIC MEN

Sun Records producer Sam Phillips (far left) poses for a publicity photo with Elvis (middle) at Sun Studio in 1956.





4: AFTER CUTTING HIS SECOND RECORD, WHERE DID ELVIS TAKE A JOB?

Elvis' first recording didn't spark the career he hoped to have, and neither did the second one he cut five months later, in January 1954. His first one at least somewhat impressed Sam Phillips' assistant, Marion Keisker, and Phillips was apparently a little interested after hearing the second one himself. But he still didn't sign Elvis immediately. In April 1954, Elvis took a job with **Crown Electric Company**, doing various jobs including driving a truck. Believing he wouldn't be able to have a career in music, he went to night school to study to be an electrician.



5: WHAT WAS THE FIRST PRODUCT ELVIS ENDORSED?

In October 1954, Elvis was invited to perform on an internationally syndicated radio show called *Louisiana Hayride*, out of Shreveport. Elvis appeared to play his first hit, “That’s All Right,” and though the response was generally lukewarm he was still signed to a one-year contract to appear regularly on Saturday nights. The *Hayride* was sponsored by a local company called **Southern Maid Donuts**. Elvis loved the donuts so much that he agreed to record a radio jingle for them, in which he sang “Southern Maid Donuts hit the spot, you can get ‘em piping hot after 4 p.m.” Elvis sang the jingle in return for one box of hot glazed doughnuts. The commercial, however, was never released.

SOUTHERN MADE

Elvis recorded the jingle for Southern Maid Donuts in 1954. Other singers, including Johnny Cash, also sang about the glazed treats for the company.

MORE THAN ALL RIGHT

Elvis’ first hit for Sun Records turned out to be a cover of Arthur Crudup’s “That’s All Right”.

THE SUN RECORD YEARS



6:

WHAT SONG CONVINCED SAM PHILLIPS TO SIGN ELVIS?

Sam Phillips brought Elvis in to see if he could record the ballad “Without You.” That didn’t work out, but Phillips was intrigued and wanted to find something else for Elvis. Phillips hired Scotty Moore and Bill Black to join Elvis at a recording session. They auditioned him at Moore’s house on July 4, 1954, and then joined him at the studio the next day. They worked deep into the night and were about to give up when Elvis launched into Arthur Crudup’s “**That’s All Right**.” Phillips leaned out of the control booth and asked, “What are you doing?” Moore and Black replied, “We don’t know.” Phillips loved it, turned the tape machine on and told them to start over. It would be Elvis’ first hit.



7:

WHAT WAS THE NAME OF ELVIS' FIRST PROFESSIONAL GROUP?

After recording “That’s All Right,” Scotty Moore and Bill Black joined Elvis, touring as a trio billed as **the Blue Moon Boys**. They later became a quartet when drummer D.J. Fontana joined them full time. The group was named after the Bill Monroe song “Blue Moon of Kentucky,” which they recorded as the B-side to “That’s All Right.” Moore and Black remained with Elvis until he was drafted into the Army in 1958.

ORIGINAL CREW

The Blue Moon Boys consisted of Elvis, guitarist Scotty Moore and bassist Bill Black. In 1955 they added drummer D.J. Fontana.

8:

WHERE DID ELVIS DEBUT HIS DANCING STYLE?

Very soon after recording their first record, Sam Phillips had Elvis and the Blue Moon Boys perform in public. Their first big job was at the **Overton Park Shell**, at a concert headlined by Slim Whitman. That was the first time Elvis debuted his famous “rubber legs”—where he backs away from the microphone during instrumental breaks and begins to wildly shake his legs. It wasn’t a completely conscious choice. The once shy boy was still nervous about playing and singing in front of a crowd. He later said he couldn’t stop his legs from shaking anyway, so he decided to just roll with it and have fun.

SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL

Elvis claimed that his signature dance move that drove his fans wild was initially due to his nerves, which caused his “rubber legs” to shake.

9:

TRUE OR FALSE: A MEMPHIS VOCAL QUARTET REJECTED ELVIS.

True. When Elvis was 19, he was friends with Cecil Blackwood and a fan of Cecil's father's gospel quartet, the Blackwood Brothers. Cecil was part of a quartet himself, called the Songfellows, that operated out of the First Assembly of God church in Memphis. Elvis wanted to join and even went for an audition. According to the biography *Last Train to Memphis*, Elvis told his father he was rejected because "they told me I couldn't sing." However, Jimmy Hamill, a member of the Songfellows who would later go on to fame as part of the Kingsmen, said it was because Elvis didn't have much of an ear for singing harmony. He was rejected by other local vocal groups, too.



Chapter 3

HIS TV APPEARANCES

Television made Elvis a
national sensation—and the source
of controversy

PRIME TIME

Thanks to his controversial dance style and obsessive fans, Elvis' television performances were legendary.

1:

WHAT WAS ELVIS' FIRST NATIONAL TV APPEARANCE?

Elvis appeared on CBS' *Stage Show* on Jan. 28, 1956. The variety show was hosted by Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, bandleader brothers who led the show on alternate weeks. In Elvis' first appearance he sang three songs—"Shake, Rattle and Roll," "Flip, Flop and Fly" and "I Got a Woman." It was the first of six appearances he was contracted to make over two months. Elvis was paid \$1,250 for each of his appearances.

NATIONAL STAR

Elvis' first national television appearance was on Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey's music and variety show on CBS, *Stage Show*.



2:

WHICH CBS TV SHOW REJECTED ELVIS?

Soon after his debut on the *Louisiana Hayride*, Elvis' management team tried to capitalize by getting him an audition for a CBS show called **Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts**. It was another radio-turned-television variety show, but this one featured performances by artists that "talent scouts" brought to the program to compete. The winner in each show was determined by a meter that recorded the volume of the studio audience's applause. A remarkable number of careers were launched with appearances (and victories) on the show. But Elvis never got that far. He was rejected after his audition on March 23, 1955.





WHERE DID ELVIS FILM HIS FIRST APPEARANCE ON NBC'S *THE MILTON BERLE SHOW*?

The Milton Berle Show was one of the most popular TV shows of the 1950s. Elvis' first appearance came on April 3, 1956, live from **the deck of the U.S.S. *Hancock***, which was docked in San Diego. In front of an all-military audience, and nationwide audience on TV, Elvis performed three songs: "Shake, Rattle and Roll," "Heartbreak Hotel" and "Blue Suede Shoes."

SHOW TIME

Elvis (left) during rehearsal for his second appearance on *The Milton Berle Show* in June 1956 in Burbank, California.

4.

ON WHAT SHOW DID ELVIS MAKE HIS FIRST TV APPEAR- ANCE?

The breakthrough performance most people remember came on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. But Elvis made several television appearances, both local and national, before that huge moment. His first TV appearance of any kind came on KSLA-TV in Shreveport, Louisiana, on the **television version of the radio show *Louisiana Hayride***. After appearing on the radio show in 1954 he was invited back to perform on the TV version on March 3, 1955.

LOCAL STAR

Scotty Moore, Elvis and Bill Black perform at the Shreveport Auditorium for the weekly broadcast of *Louisiana Hayride* in 1954.



5: WHAT SONG DID ELVIS SING DURING HIS SECOND APPEARANCE ON MILTON BERLE'S SHOW?

On June 5, 1956, at NBC's studio in Hollywood, Elvis turned in one of the most controversial performances of his career. Elvis left his guitar backstage when he sang his hit song "**Hound Dog**." All was fine for about 90 seconds, but then Elvis waved his hand at his band and the song immediately slowed down. As it did, Elvis began thrusting his hips, making suggestive movements, much to the delight of the young people in the studio audience. Jack Gould wrote in *The New York Times*: "He is a rock-and-roll variation on one of the most standard acts in show business: the virtuoso of the hootchy-kootchy."

6:

WHAT TV STAR DEEMED ELVIS TO BE “UNFIT FOR FAMILY VIEWING”?

Following Elvis’ bawdy rendition of “Hound Dog” on *The Milton Berle Show*, reporters asked CBS’s **Ed Sullivan** if he’d consider booking the singer. Sullivan said he would never do it, calling him “unfit for family viewing.” Ed must have had a change of heart, because three months later Elvis was on *The Ed Sullivan Show*.

CHANGE OF HEART

Ed Sullivan and Elvis Presley pictured at a press conference for Elvis’ first appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in 1956.



WHO DID ELVIS SING TO ON NBC’S *THE STEVE ALLEN SHOW*?

Elvis sang “Hound Dog” to a **Basset hound named Sherlock**. This happened on July 1, 1956—just a few weeks after Elvis’ scandalous take on the same song on *The Milton Berle Show*. Hoping that comedy might calm the controversy, Elvis sang without any gyrating while wearing a tuxedo. (Sherlock wore a tiny top hat and bow tie.) Allen said the idea of singing to a dog was “a funny set-up.” It probably didn’t matter—by booking Elvis, Allen’s show beat Ed Sullivan’s that night for the very first time.

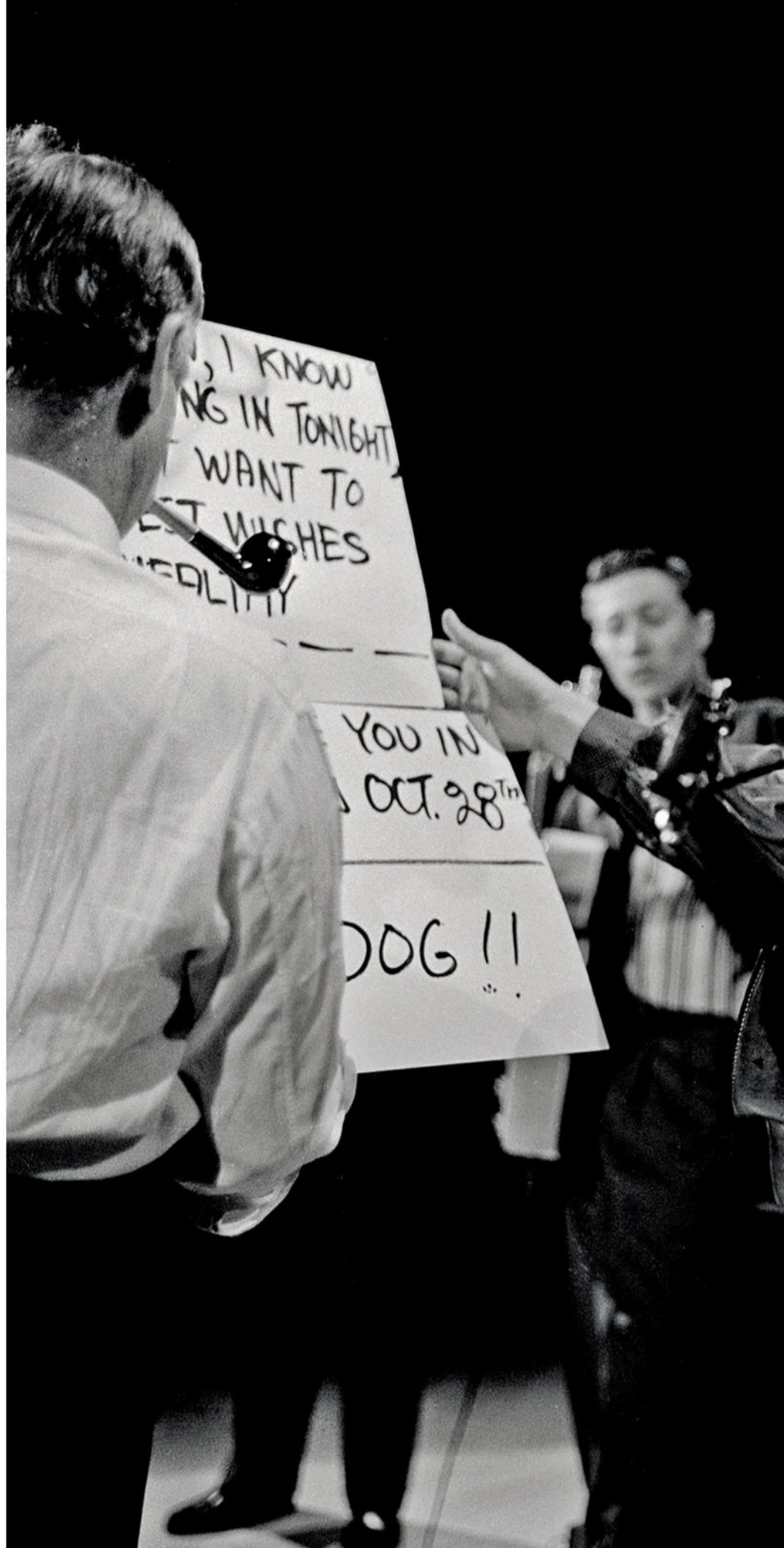
HOUND DOG

To avoid controversy, Steve Allen arranged for Elvis to perform “Hound Dog” with a Basset hound during his appearance in July 1956.



8: TRUE OR FALSE: ELVIS WAS SHOWN WAIST UP FOR HIS FIRST ED SULLIVAN APPEARANCE?

False. Though Ed Sullivan had promised that Elvis could be controlled with camera angles, there were many shots of Elvis, head to toe, during his first two appearances. Those first two performances were mild compared to what happened on *The Milton Berle Show*—but weren't without controversy. According to the International News Service, Sullivan received 70,000 letters about Elvis, some 40,000 of which complained about his dancing. So, on his third appearance—Jan. 6, 1957—CBS decided to shoot Elvis only from the waist up.





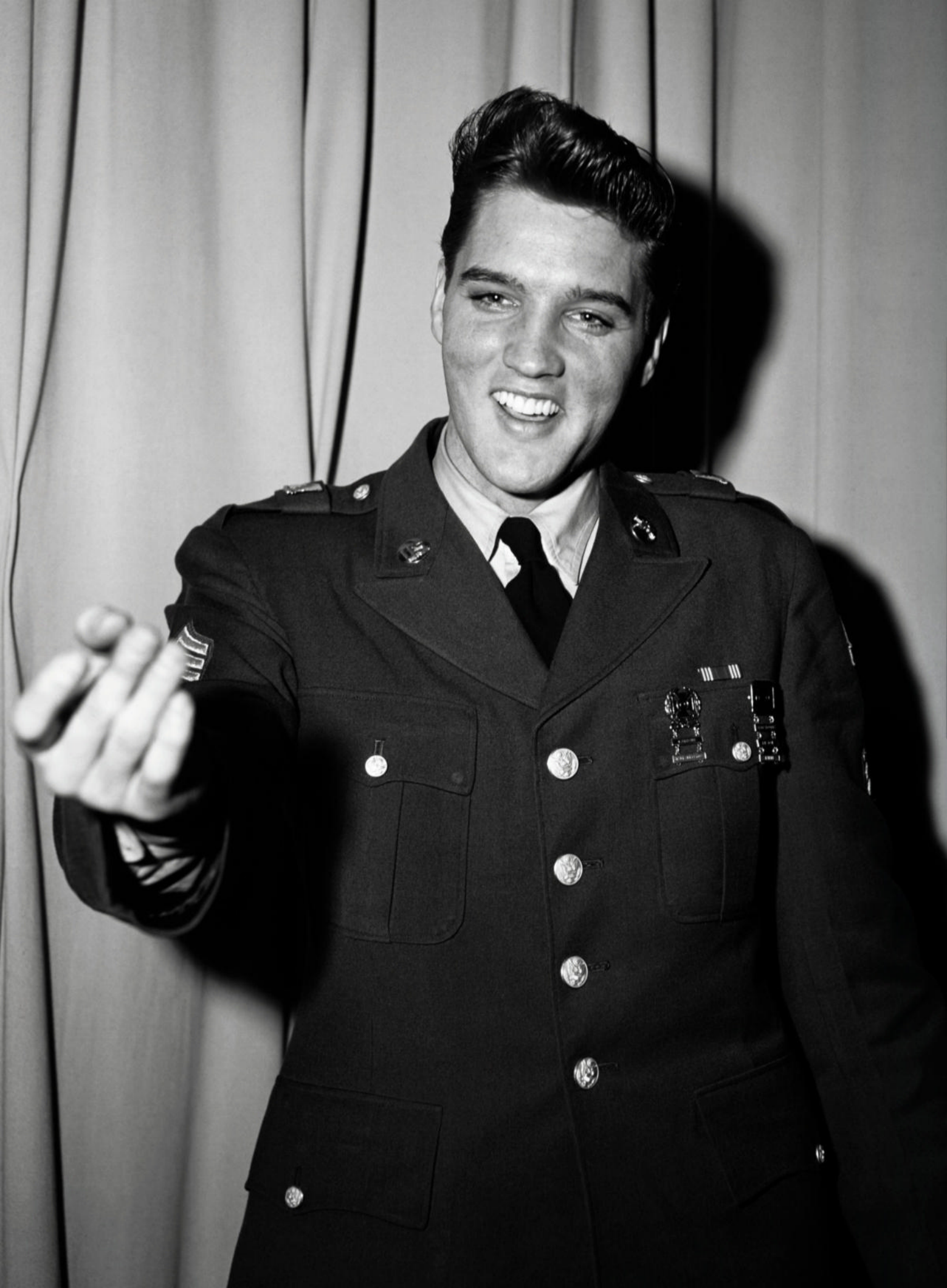
9.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WATCHED ELVIS' FIRST APPEARANCE ON *ED* SULLIVAN?

Losing to Steve Allen just once in the ratings changed the situation for Ed Sullivan. He quickly booked the singer for a three-show deal worth an unprecedented \$50,000. Elvis' first appearance, on Sept. 9, 1956, was seen by **more than 60 million people**—a record 82.6% of the television audience at the time. Elvis sang four songs over two sets: "Don't Be Cruel," "Love Me Tender," "Ready Teddy" and a shortened version of "Hound Dog." The host of the show that night was actor Charles Laughton, filling in for Sullivan who was home recovering from a car accident.

RECORD BREAKER

Elvis prepares for his first performance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in Los Angeles in September 1956.



Chapter 4

THE ARMY YEARS

At the peak of popularity, Elvis left show business to serve the country

SERVICEMAN

Elvis poses for photographers in his uniform upon completing 18 months of service in the U.S. Army, where he was stationed in Friedberg, Germany.

L.

WHY DIDN'T ELVIS RECEIVE A DRAFT DEFERMENT?

Elvis actually received two draft deferments from active duty service more than four years apart. The first came shortly after he turned 18 in January 1953. Since he was a student in good standing at L.C. Humes High School in Memphis at the time, he got a student deferment that prevented him from serving during the final months of the Korean War. His second deferment came after his draft notice on Dec. 20, 1957. He was filming his fourth movie—*King Creole*—and was aware that Paramount Pictures had already invested \$350,000 in the project. So he wrote to the Memphis Draft Board asking for a three-month deferment so he could finish the film. They granted it, and he was formally inducted into the Army on March 24, 1958.

ARMY CUT

Elvis receives a haircut from a U.S. Army barber at Fort Chaffee in Arkansas.



2: WHERE DID ELVIS UNDERGO BASIC TRAINING?

After Elvis was inducted into the Army, in front of news cameras and reporters from around the world in a publicity event set up by his manager, Colonel Tom Parker, he was first sent to Fort Chaffee in Arkansas. But he was only there four days before he was shipped off to **Fort Hood** in Texas where he did both his basic and advanced training over a period that lasted from March 28, 1958, to Sept. 17, 1958.

3: WHY WAS ELVIS GRANTED A SECOND EXTENDED LEAVE DURING HIS FIRST FIVE MONTHS IN THE ARMY?

The first leave was standard between basic and advanced training. That happened in early June 1958, and Elvis used the time to return home to Nashville to see his family and to record five songs. His second leave was unplanned. His beloved mother, Gladys, was diagnosed with hepatitis. Her condition kept getting worse and eventually Elvis was allowed to leave his post and **tend to his mother on her deathbed**. He began his visit with her on Aug. 12, and two days later she died at age 46. Elvis was devastated.



4.

WHERE WAS ELVIS STATIONED IN THE ARMY?

The United States was not at war during Elvis' stint in the Army, but he was still shipped overseas. On Oct. 1, 1958, he was sent to **Ray Barracks in Friedberg, Germany**. He was assigned to the Scout Platoon of the 3rd Armored Division's 1st Medium Tank Battalion, 32nd Armor, as an armor intelligence specialist. As a well-known celebrity, he could have joined Special Services, which would have allowed him to avoid certain duties that other soldiers had to endure. But he chose not to. The only perk he got was permission to live off base.

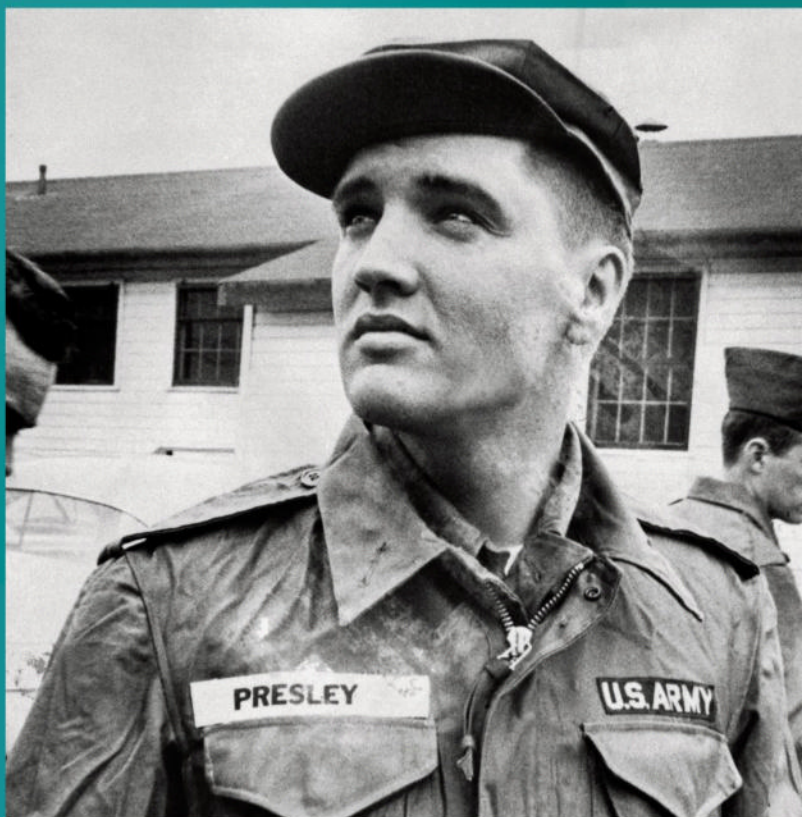
ARMED ELVIS

Elvis holds an artillery gun during Army training. He shipped off to basic training at Ford Hood, Texas, in 1958.

MILITARY MAN

Elvis declined to join the Army's Special Services and opted to fulfill the duties expected of all soldiers.

THE ARMY YEARS

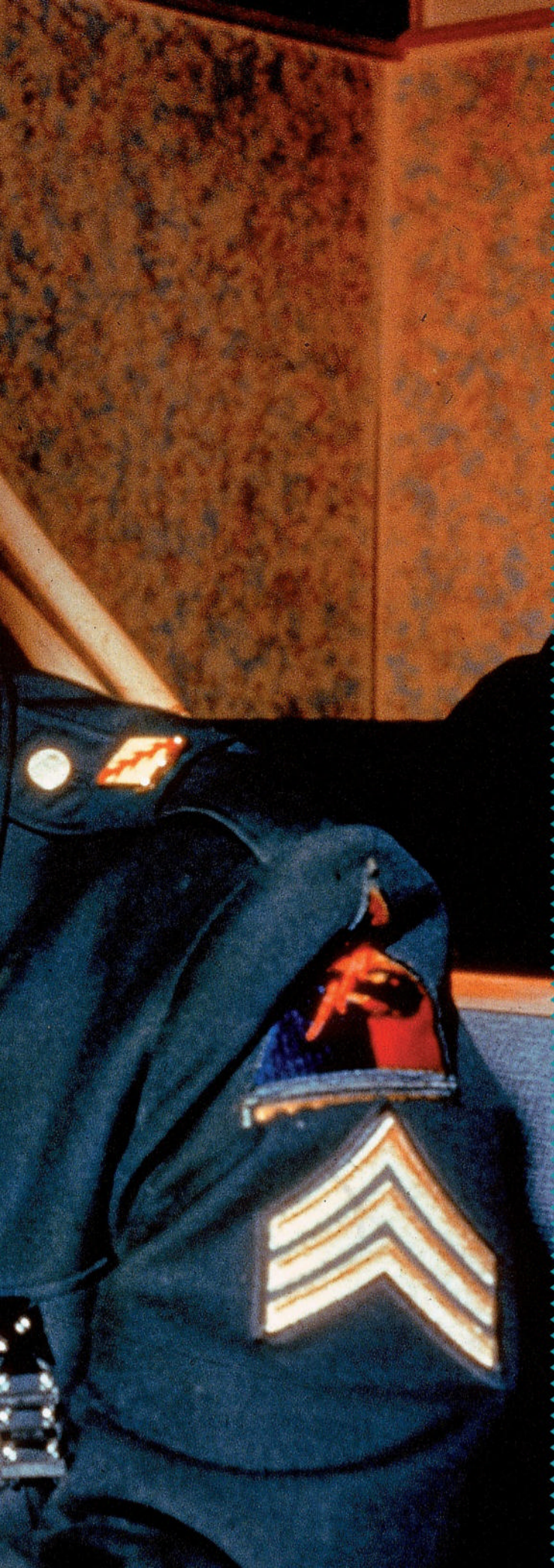


5:

WHAT SELF-DEFENSE TECHNIQUE DID ELVIS LEARN IN THE ARMY?

Elvis became intrigued by **karate** after he saw a judo demonstration during his Army training days. So when he was shipped off to Germany, he decided to try and learn the art. He found an instructor named Jurgen Seydel who was willing to teach him. Elvis took private lessons in the Shotokan style at his off-base house. He continued those lessons during a vacation in Paris, when he was taught by Tesugio Murakami, one of the top Shotokan practitioners in Japan. He spent hours training with other soldiers back on the base. Karate became a lifelong passion. By the time he died in 1977 he was a seventh-degree black belt.





6:

HOW MANY **TOP 40 HITS** DID ELVIS HAVE DURING HIS 24 MONTHS IN THE ARMY?

Between the time he was inducted and the day he was discharged, Elvis Presley had **10** top 40 hits. They included “Wear My Ring Around Your Neck,” “Doncha Think It’s Time,” “Hard Headed Woman,” “Don’t Ask Me Why,” “One Night,” “I Got Stung,” “(Now and Then There’s) A Fool Such as I,” “I Need Your Love Tonight,” “A Big Hunk o’ Love” and “My Wish Came True.” Two of those songs—“Hard Headed Woman” and “A Big Hunk o’ Love”—reached No. 1 on the charts.

STRING OF HITS

To keep his famous client relevant, Elvis’ manager, Colonel Tom Parker, released singles that Elvis had already recorded while he served overseas.



7:

WHO DID ELVIS MEET WHILE HE WAS STATIONED IN GERMANY?

During his time in Germany, the then-24-year-old Elvis met a 14-year-old **Priscilla Beaulieu**. The two met at a party on Sept. 13, 1959. Priscilla had moved to Germany when her father, a U.S. Air Force officer, was transferred there. Elvis and Priscilla spoke by phone for more than two years after his military service was complete. She eventually moved back to the U.S. to be with the man she called “the love of my life, truly.”

ELVIS FINDS HIS QUEEN

Elvis and Priscilla Beaulieu met at a party on Sept. 13, 1959. Elvis was instantly smitten. They eventually married on May 1, 1967, in Las Vegas.

8.

WHAT MILITARY RANKS DID ELVIS HOLD?

Like everyone drafted into the Army, Elvis began as a Private when he was inducted on March 24, 1958. After that, he received three promotions. He was promoted to Private First Class on Nov. 27, 1958, then Specialist Fourth Class on June 1, 1959. Finally, he was promoted to **Sergeant** on Feb. 11, 1960, less than a month before he was discharged. “People were expecting me to mess up, to goof up in one way or another,” he told Armed Forces Radio and Television. “I was determined to go to any limits to prove otherwise, not only to the people who were wondering, but to myself.”

MOVING UP THE RANKS

Elvis was promoted to Sergeant on Feb. 11, 1960, less than a month before he was finally discharged from military service.

9: WHAT DID ELVIS DO WITH HIS ARMY SALARY?

During his nearly two years in the Army, Elvis was paid just like every other soldier. It wasn't all that much. His highest salary, which came after he was promoted to Sergeant less than a month before his discharge, earned him a rate of \$122.31 per month. Upon his discharge in March 1960, **he donated all of his Army pay to charity.** Then he used some of the money he earned from his music while serving in the military to take care of his fellow soldiers. He bought an extra set of fatigues for everyone in his outfit and new TVs for his fellow soldiers to enjoy.



Chapter 5

THE MOVIES

Elvis made a lot of films—and a lot
of money—in Hollywood

THE PICTURES

It wasn't long before Hollywood came knocking on Elvis' door. He starred
in over 30 feature films throughout his career.



ELVIS PRESLEY

IN "LOVE ME TENDER"

STARTS THURS NOV 15 AT NY. PARAMOUNT

TAB HUNT

NATALIE WO

IN "THE GIRL

HE LEFT BEH

PARAMO

MCBRIDE'S
THEATRE TICKET OFFICE

YORK CITY OMNIBUS CORPORATION





WHAT WAS THE ORIGINAL NAME OF ELVIS' FIRST MOVIE?

Elvis was originally signed by Paramount Pictures, but the studio was unable to find a suitable project so they loaned him to 20th Century Fox so he could play a relatively small role in a film then called ***The Reno Brothers***. Elvis played Clint Reno, the youngest, with three older brothers who were soldiers in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. But during a break in filming the movie, Elvis made an appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* and performed his song "Love Me Tender" for the first time. The single went gold, selling over a million copies. Wanting to capitalize on the success of his hit, Fox changed the name of the movie to *Love Me Tender* before it was released.

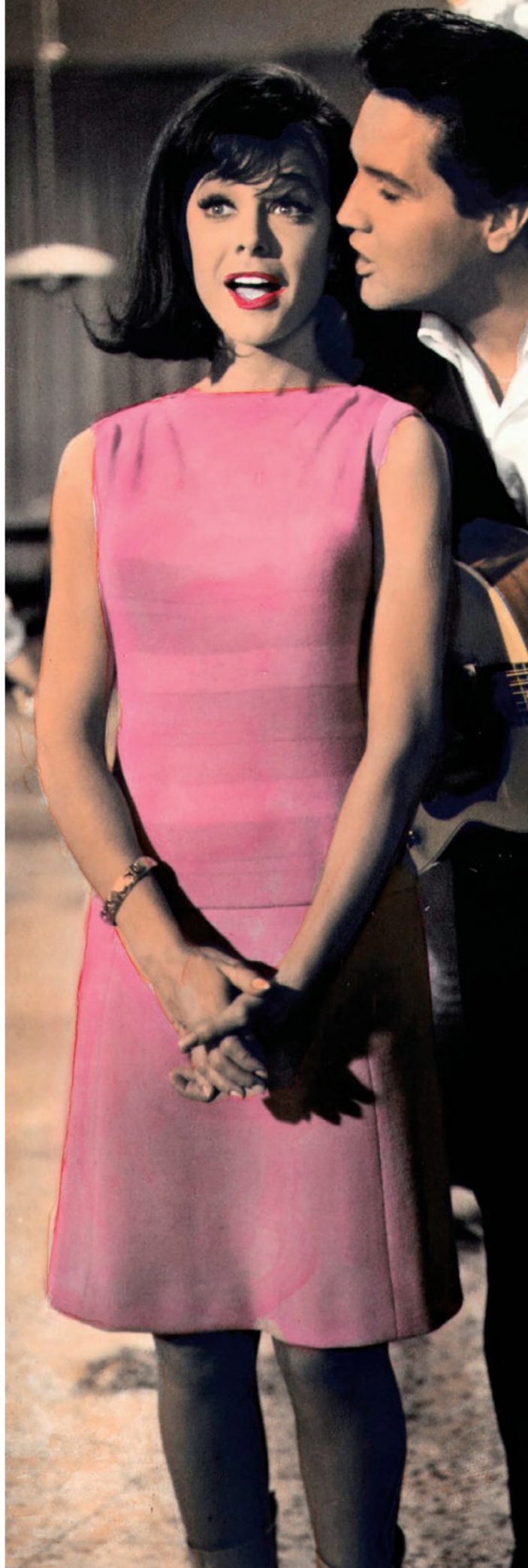
IN THEATERS

New York's Paramount Theater marquee, accompanied by a huge poster of Elvis, advertises *Love Me Tender* in 1956.

2:

TRUE OR FALSE: ED ASNER'S FILM DEBUT WAS IN AN ELVIS MOVIE.

True. Ed Asner, who would gain fame for playing the role of Lou Grant on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, was a relatively unknown Broadway actor who began getting small roles on television in the late 1950s. In 1962, he made his film debut in the Elvis Presley movie *Kid Galahad*. He played Frank Gerson, the assistant district attorney—a minor part in the movie, in which Elvis played a boxer. Seven years later, in 1969, Asner and Presley were back together in the movie *Change of Habit*. Asner again had a minor role as Lt. Moretti in a film that starred Presley and Mary Tyler Moore, who would reunite with Asner in their legendary TV sitcom one year later.



3.

WHICH ACTRESS STARRED ALONGSIDE ELVIS IN THE MOST FILMS?

Only one actress appeared with Elvis as many as three times in his films—**Shelley Fabares**. She made her debut with him in *Girl Happy* in 1965, then was his co-star again in 1966 in *Spinout*, and finally *Clambake* in 1967. Her career wasn't made or defined by her association with Elvis, though. She had already emerged as a star years earlier on the popular TV sitcom, *The Donna Reed Show*. She also recorded the song "Johnny Angel," which reached No. 1 on the Billboard charts in 1962. And years later, her career would be revived when she played the role of Hayden Fox's love interest, Christine Armstrong, in the TV sitcom *Coach*.

4: TRUE OR FALSE: ELVIS RECEIVED TOP BILLING IN EVERY FILM HE EVER MADE.

False—but it was almost true. During his film career, many of Elvis' movies were made to market him and his songs. Even his screen debut—*Love Me Tender*—was given the title of one of his songs to capitalize on his popularity. However, he was not the star of that first film, nor did he receive top billing. Richard Egan and Debra Paget were the main attractions. Movie posters did feature a picture of Elvis playing the guitar, though, and he was listed as "introducing Elvis Presley."

LEADING LADY
Shelley Fabares (as Cynthia Foxhugh) and Elvis (as Mike McCoy) appeared together in the 1966 musical comedy *Spinout*.

5: WHAT WAS ELVIS' **FIRST** **FILM** AFTER HE WAS RELEASED FROM THE ARMY?

Elvis starred as U.S. Army Specialist 5 Tulsa McLean—a singing soldier who was stationed in Germany. The movie was originally going to be called *Christmas in Berlin*. It was later changed to *Café Europa*, which remained its title in several international versions, before the producers settled on ***G.I. Blues***. The idea was conceived by producer and director Hal Wallis, and the script began almost as soon as Elvis was drafted. They began shooting it in Germany while Elvis was still stationed there, though he didn't appear in any of those scenes.

SINGING SOLDIER

Elvis played Tulsa McLean, a tank crewman with a singing career, in the 1960 hit film *G.I. Blues*.



6: WHAT MAJOR 1970S MOVIE ROLE DID ELVIS TURN DOWN?

In 1974, Elvis was offered a chance to revive his acting career and play the kind of dramatic role he had been searching for all along. He was approached by Barbra Streisand, who was set to star in a remake of the classic *A Star Is Born*. She wanted Elvis to play John Norman Howard, the hard-drinking rock star whose career was in decline when he falls in love with a rising star named Esther Hoffman (Streisand). Elvis was interested, but negotiations broke down over the demands of his manager, Colonel Tom Parker, who wanted Elvis to get \$1,000 per week in expenses, first-class transportation, a \$1 million salary and top billing—even over Streisand. As much as Elvis apparently wanted the role, his manager didn't want him portrayed as a rock star in decline.

WHICH ELVIS MOVIE IS PRESERVED IN THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS?

Forty-seven years after it was released, the National Film Registry of the Library of Congress selected ***Jailhouse Rock*** for preservation. It was among 25 films chosen that year, including *Ben Hur* (1959), *Schindler's List* (1993) and *The Nutty Professor* (1963). The films were chosen not because they were the “best” but, according to Librarian of Congress James H. Billington, because of their “cultural, historical or aesthetic significance” and because they are part of the “finest summations of American cinema’s wondrous first century.” The 1957 film stars Elvis as Vince Everett, who ends up in jail with a washed-up country singer who teaches him how to sing and play guitar. It is considered one of Elvis’ edgiest film roles ever.



8: HOW MANY MOVIES DID ELVIS MAKE?

Over a 13-year span, Elvis acted in **31 films**. The list grows to 33 if two concert documentaries are included: 1970's *Elvis: That's the Way It Is* and 1972's *Elvis on Tour*. Elvis stopped acting in films because he grew frustrated by the roles he was given. He wanted more serious and dramatic parts. He didn't want to be in a film just to hawk his music. In fact, according to Elvis' father, Vernon, he wasn't happy with most of his films.

MOVIE MAKER

Elvis performs on the set of 1957's *Jailhouse Rock* (left). In 2004, the film was preserved in the National Film Registry of the Library of Congress.

9: WHAT WAS ELVIS' HIGHEST- GROSSING FILM?

Viva Las Vegas, the 1964 movie co-starring Ann-Margret, was the highest-grossing film of Elvis' career. It brought in \$9.4 million at the box office. In the film, Elvis plays Lucky Jackson, a racecar driver trying to earn enough money to fix his car's engine before a race, while wooing Ann-Margret's character, Rusty Martin. Remarkably, the box-office take was nearly double Elvis' second highest-grossing film, *Love Me Tender*.

UNLUCKY IN LOVE

Viva Las Vegas, the 1964 musical co-starring Ann-Margret (below, left), was Elvis' highest-grossing film and considered to be his best.





The background of the entire page is a dark, textured collage of numerous silhouettes of Elvis Presley in various poses, some holding instruments like guitars or drums, creating a sense of his iconic stage presence.

Chapter 6

THE COMEBACK SPECIAL

In 1968, Elvis returned to TV and
sparked a career revival

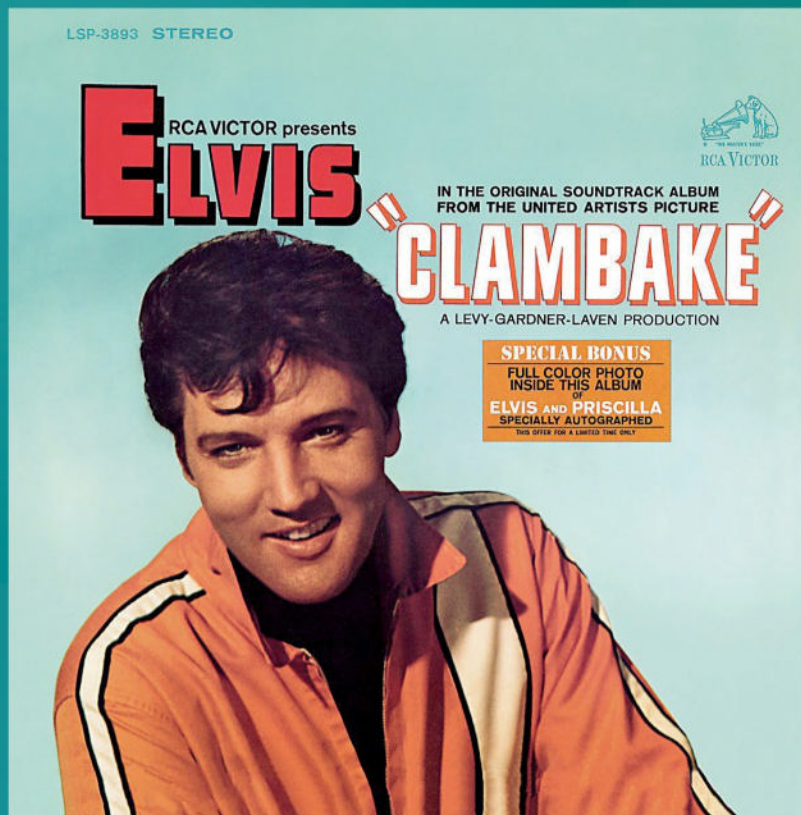
RETURN OF THE KING

Elvis tapes a performance for his comeback special on June 27, 1968,
in Burbank, California.



WHAT WAS THE ORIGINAL PLAN FOR THE COMEBACK SPECIAL?

The TV show that made America remember how special Elvis was as a performer wasn't planned to be a "comeback special" at all. Colonel Tom Parker wanted Elvis to star in **an hour-long Christmas special**. That plan was changed when Steve Binder was hired as the director and he met with Elvis to discuss plans. Elvis told Binder that he was nervous, so Binder came up with the idea of a televised concert. Years later, Binder told the *Washington Post* that he said to Elvis: "Why don't you make an album and I'll put pictures to it?" Priscilla Presley added that both Elvis and Binder knew a Christmas special was a bad idea, so "they bypassed Col. Parker and they did what they wanted to do." Binder believed that the change in plans was critical to the late surge in Elvis' career.



2:

WHAT WAS ELVIS' LAST ALBUM BEFORE HIS '68 COMEBACK SPECIAL?

Elvis' career was in an obvious decline in the late 1960s. He had a run of eight singles released from January 1967 through May 1968 that included only two top 40 hits, and none went higher than No. 28 on the Billboard charts. Worse, the album he released before his comeback TV special—the **soundtrack to the movie *Clambake***—sold about 200,000 copies. It was by far the lowest-selling album at that point in his career. Elvis "felt like it was a make-or-break-him moment," Priscilla Presley told the *Washington Post* years later.

3:

HOW LONG HAD IT BEEN SINCE ELVIS HAD PERFORMED LIVE BEFORE HIS COMEBACK SPECIAL?

By the time Elvis appeared before a studio audience in late June 1968, it had been **more than seven years** since his last live performance. That happened on March 25, 1961, when Elvis sang at Bloch Arena at the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard in Hawaii. The concert was a benefit arranged by his manager, Colonel Tom Parker, who read a newspaper story about an effort to raise funds to construct a memorial for the U.S.S. *Arizona*, which had been sunk during the Pearl Harbor attack. The concert raised \$62,000 for the fund.

4.

WHAT WAS THE BREAK-OUT HIT FROM THE SPECIAL?

If Tom Parker had gotten his way, the final song in Elvis' TV special would have been "I'll Be Home for Christmas," followed by Elvis giving a brief statement about the assassinations of Robert F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Instead, director Steve Binder asked writer Walter Earl Brown and composer Billy Goldenberg to come up with an original song. Knowing Elvis' fondness for Dr. King, they wrote "**If I Can Dream.**" Parker hated it, saying, "This ain't Elvis' kind of song." Elvis loved it and after hearing it the first time said: "I'm never going to sing another song I don't believe in." The song was released as a single 11 days before the TV special aired. It spent three months on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, peaking at No. 12.

POWERFUL PERFORMANCE

Elvis' powerful rendition of the original song "If I Can Dream," inspired by Elvis' fondness for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was the breakout hit of his special.





5: HOW MANY SEPARATE PERFORMANCES WERE TAPED AND INCLUDED IN THE SPECIAL?

There were a lot of components to the Elvis comeback special, including bigger numbers staged in a television studio without an audience. But the most memorable elements were **four** made-for-television live performances in front of a small audience. There were two “sit-down” shows with a small group of musicians in an intimate setting that were taped on June 27, 1968. And there were two “stand-up” concerts featuring an orchestra backing Elvis, making for a larger concert-like setting taped two days later. In all, Elvis taped about four hours of singing and talking—mostly singing.

6: HOW MUCH WAS ELVIS PAID FOR THE SPECIAL?

Elvis received **\$250,000** to take part in the TV special. It was a huge amount of money—and there was much more to the deal than that. When Colonel Tom Parker approached NBC vice president Tom Sarnoff with the idea, he insisted on a deal worth a total of \$1.25 million. That included Elvis’ \$250,000 salary, plus an \$850,000 commitment to produce Elvis’ next movie (which became *Change of Habit*), another \$25,000 to produce the soundtrack for that movie, and \$125,000 for the right to rerun the special at a later date. To defray some of the costs, NBC enlisted a sponsor—Singer Corporation, a Tennessee-based manufacturer of sewing machines. That’s why the actual title of the show wasn’t *The ’68 Comeback Special*, it was *Singer Presents ... Elvis!*

GETTING INTIMATE

Elvis prepares to perform a “sit-down” show in front of a small studio audience while taping his comeback special on June 27, 1968.

7: TRUE OR FALSE: ELVIS' SPECIAL WAS NBC'S HIGHEST-RATED SHOW OF THE SEASON.

True. Elvis' career may have been in decline, but his star hadn't faded. The show not only topped the Nielsen ratings for that week, it was NBC's highest-rated show of the season and the highest-rated show on any network that season, with 42% of the television audience at the time watching the show. As author Ernst Jorgensen wrote in his book *Elvis: A Life in Music*, the special "re-established his place as a dominant force in American music and culture."

8: WHERE DID ELVIS PERFORM AFTER THE COMEBACK SPECIAL?

Elvis had many offers after the special, including a big one for a one-week engagement at the Palladium in London. But he and Colonel Tom Parker settled on a bigger offer from the brand-new **International Hotel in Las Vegas**. It claimed to have the biggest showroom in the city, so it wanted to book the biggest act in the country. Elvis was contracted for what was supposed to be a four-week summer gig, with 57 shows over a one-month span beginning on July 31, 1969. But demand for tickets was so great, the original contract was extended. Elvis became a Las Vegas staple for the next seven years, performing over 600 sold-out shows.





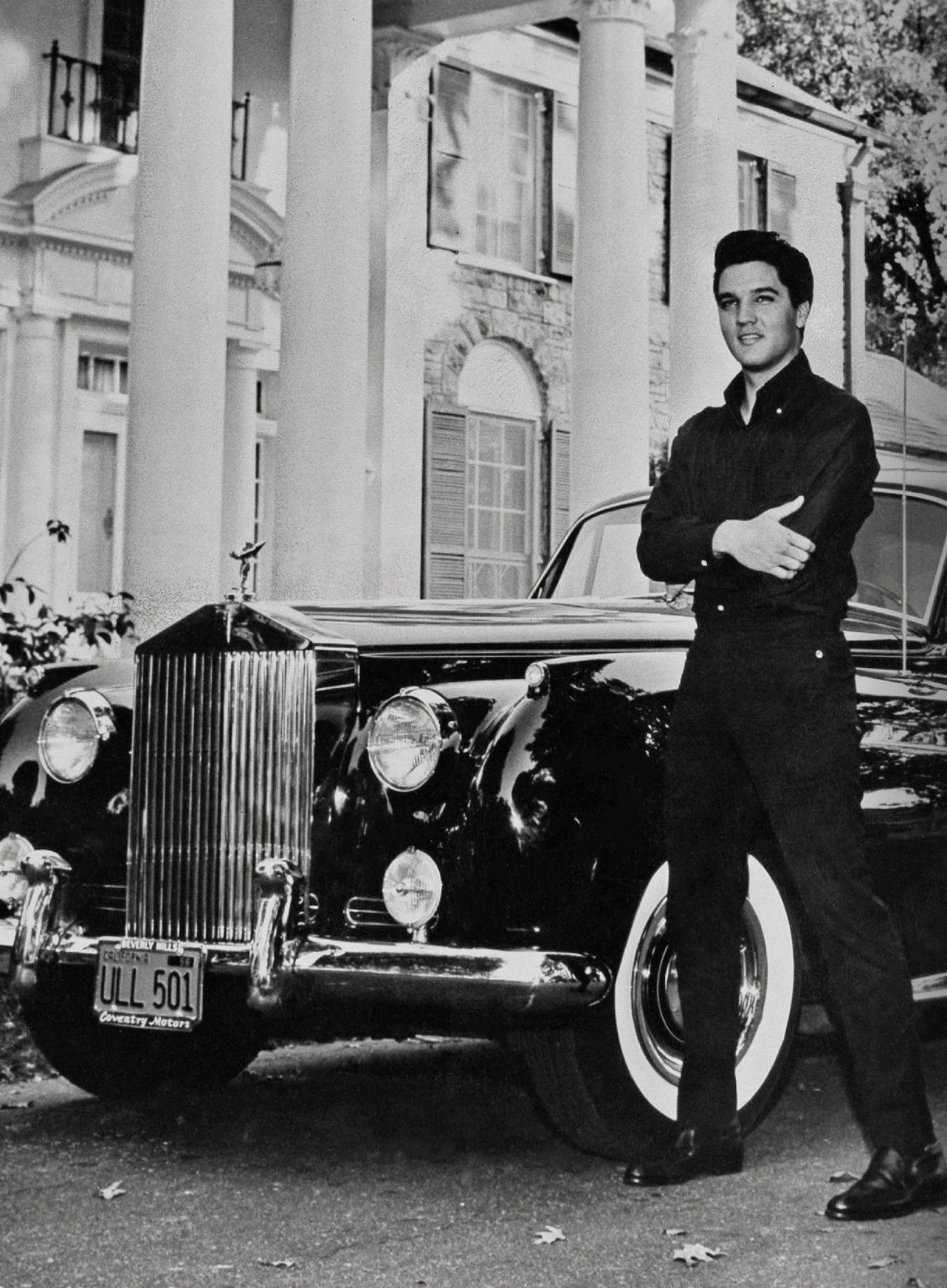
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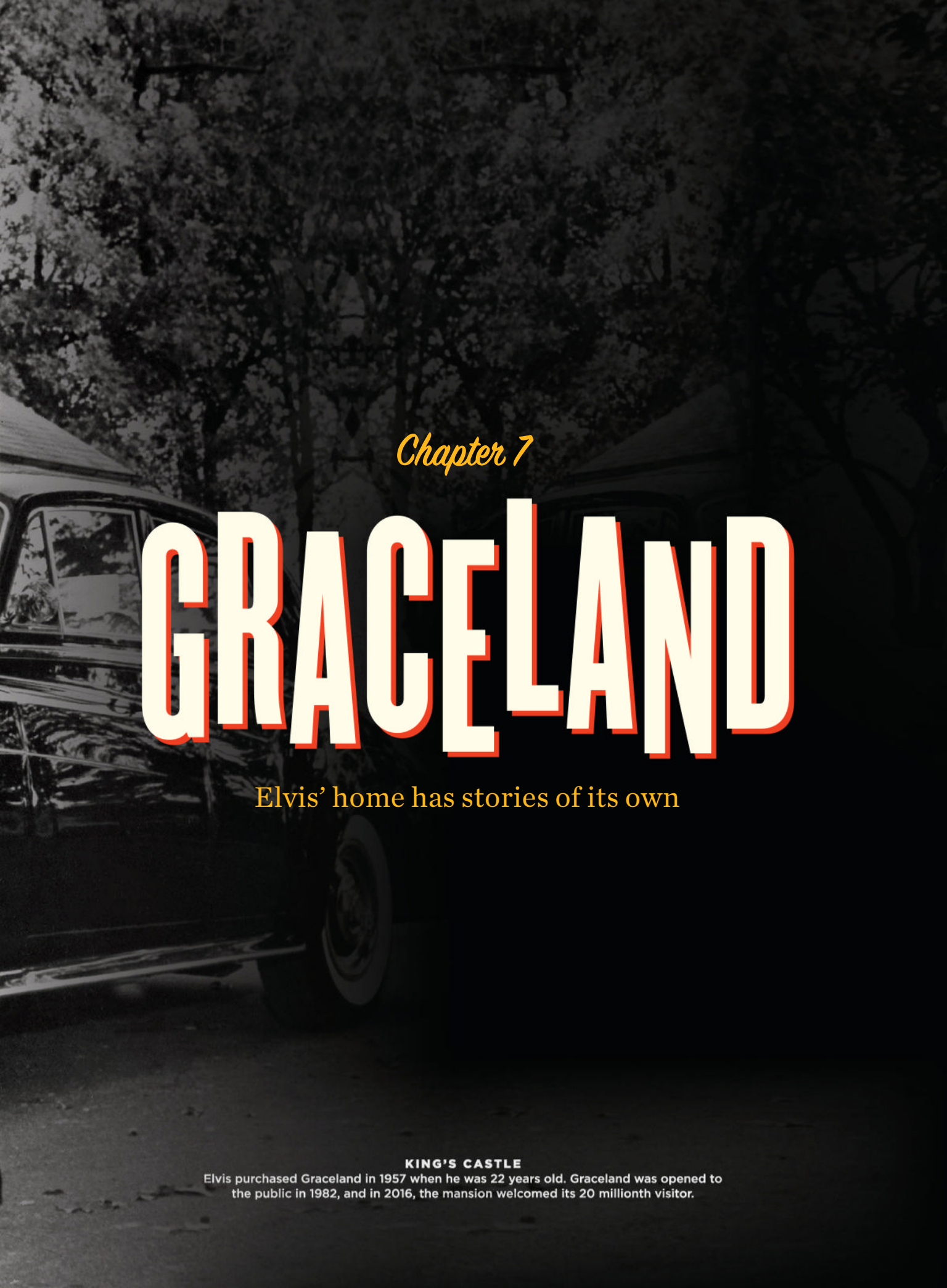
WHAT WAS THE **FIRST** **SONG** ELVIS RECORDED AFTER THE COMEBACK SPECIAL?

Revived by the positive reception for his special, Elvis decided to enter the recording studio shortly after it aired. He had stopped producing anything but soundtrack albums for years, on the advice of his manager, Colonel Tom Parker. Now he wanted to get back to his roots, so he began recording a comeback album. The first single released was **“In the Ghetto,”** written by Mac Davis, with lyrics that poignantly detailed the vicious cycle of poverty. Elvis recorded the song backed by the Memphis Boys, the legendary house band at American Sound Studio. “In the Ghetto” reached No. 3 on the Billboard charts and No. 1 in nine other countries.

BACK TO HIS ROOTS

From *Elvis in Memphis* and its 1969 hit single, “In the Ghetto,” marked Elvis’ return to making non-soundtracks following his comeback special.





Chapter 7

GRACELAND

Elvis' home has stories of its own

KING'S CASTLE

Elvis purchased Graceland in 1957 when he was 22 years old. Graceland was opened to the public in 1982, and in 2016, the mansion welcomed its 20 millionth visitor.

1: WHAT WAS THE NAME OF ELVIS' TURKEY THAT HE KEPT AT GRACELAND?

It wasn't an accident that Elvis and his parents chose a farm to call home. They all loved animals. And they made good use of Graceland. Elvis' mother, Gladys, raised chickens. His father, Vernon, raised hogs. Elvis famously had a turkey named **Bowtie**. Eventually he added ducks and horses to the farmland, too. More exotic animals that called Graceland home included a mynah bird that learned phrases it heard like "Elvis is asleep." Fans in Australia sent him two wallabies, which he donated to a zoo. He also had a chimpanzee, a squirrel monkey and several dogs.





HOW MANY PEOPLE VISIT GRACELAND EVERY YEAR?

Graceland opened to the public in 1982, and it very quickly became a top tourist attraction. Today, the mansion is open year-round, except for Thanksgiving and Christmas, and welcomes **an estimated 600,000 visitors** every year. On May 30, 2016, the mansion marked its 20 millionth visitor. According to *Forbes* magazine, the only house in the United States that gets more visitors every year is the White House.

FLOCKING FANS

Graceland has an estimated 600,000 visitors a year. The only house in the United States to welcome more visitors per year is reportedly the White House.

GRACELAND

3: WHO OWNED GRACELAND BEFORE ELVIS?

The 500-acre property that would eventually be known as Graceland was an enormous farm that spent generations in the hands of the family of Stephen C. Toof, founder of the oldest commercial printing firm in Memphis. Upon Toof's death in 1894, his daughter, Grace, inherited most of it. When she died, it was passed on to her niece, **Ruth Moore**. In 1939, Ruth and her husband Thomas designed and built the 10,266-square foot Colonial mansion that would eventually become Elvis' home.

AMAZING GRACE

Graceland became famous thanks to Elvis, but the home was originally named for owner Stephen C. Toof's daughter, Grace.

4: HOW DID GRACELAND GET ITS NAME?

Elvis didn't come up with the name, nor did any of his associates. He inherited it when he bought the house. In fact, the name "Graceland" actually refers to the entire grounds on which the mansion sits. It was originally known as Graceland Farms when it belonged to the family of Stephen C. Toof. And **it got the name in honor of his daughter, Grace.**

JUNGLE ROOM

The most famous room for visitors of Graceland to witness is known as the "Jungle Room." It features a green shag carpet and an indoor waterfall.

5: WHAT WAS THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF ELVIS' FAMOUS "JUNGLE ROOM"?

Perhaps the most famous room inside Graceland is the "Jungle Room"—which Elvis simply called "the den." To him, it was a tropical **man cave**. It features an indoor waterfall and a green shag carpet, and it is filled with items he imported from Hawaii as mementos from when he filmed *Blue Hawaii* in 1961. In 1976, the room took on a more practical purpose. It was converted into a convenient recording studio, where Elvis made most of his final two albums: *From Elvis Presley Boulevard, Memphis, Tennessee* (1976) and *Moody Blue* (1977). For the record, it wasn't known as the "Jungle Room" until the mansion opened to the public in 1982.







TRUE OR FALSE: ELVIS WAS IMME- DIATELY BURIED AT GRACELAND.

False. Elvis is currently buried at Graceland alongside his parents, his grandmother and his grandson. After his death in 1977, Elvis was buried at Forest Hill Cemetery in Memphis, next to his mother, Gladys. His tomb was visible to the public through an iron gate. Less than two weeks after his burial, three men were arrested outside the tomb with plans to break in, steal Elvis' body and ransom it back to the family. That was enough to convince Elvis' father, Vernon, to petition the city of Memphis to have the body exhumed and reburied at Graceland.

BURYING A LEGEND

Elvis was initially laid to rest beside his mother, Gladys, at Forest Hill Cemetery in Memphis. Later, his body was exhumed and moved to Graceland.

FIT FOR THE KING

Elvis expanded the 10,000-square-foot mansion to a 17,552-square-foot palace with 23 rooms.

GRACELAND

7:

HOW MANY BATHROOMS ARE IN THE GRACELAND MANSION?

Throughout the years, Elvis nearly doubled the size of the Graceland mansion, developing it from the 10,000-square-foot home that he bought into a gigantic, 17,552-square-foot structure. After all of his additions, the mansion included 23 rooms. A remarkable **eight** of those were bathrooms. There were eight bedrooms too, including several suites, each of which had a private bathroom. The upstairs bathroom in Elvis's private suite—the one where he died—is closed to the public and is never expected to be open.



8:

HOW MUCH DID ELVIS PAY FOR GRACELAND?

Elvis Presley paid **\$102,500** for Graceland. It doesn't sound like a lot of money now, but it certainly was in 1957. That included the mansion, a barn and approximately 14 acres of land. His parents, Vernon and Gladys, were actually the ones who found the property. Elvis had given them a budget of \$100,000. The purchase was finalized on March 19, 1957.

HAPPY HOME

Elvis gave his parents, Vernon and Gladys, a budget of \$100,000 to find them a farmhouse property to purchase.



WHY DID ELVIS PURCHASE GRACELAND?

When his career first started to take off, Elvis purchased a \$40,000 home for himself and his family in Memphis—and that house quickly became a tourist attraction. Fans, reporters and photographers would show up all the time just to see how Elvis lived. The crowds became so large and constant that it was a burden for his neighbors. Even though Elvis was only 22 years old, he went shopping for a bigger house with more land so that he and his family could have some **privacy**, and his neighbors wouldn't have to deal with any spillover from his rising fame.

PRIVATE SANCTUARY

Elvis purchased Graceland in March 1957 in order for him and his family to have more land and more privacy from fans and reporters.





Chapter 8

HIS HOBBIES

Elvis indulged many passions

MAN OF MANY INTERESTS

Elvis enjoyed a number of hobbies that ran the gamut from horseback riding and racquetball to collecting law enforcement badges.

L.

WHO GOT ELVIS INTERESTED IN HORSEBACK RIDING?

There was a time in his life when Elvis was a bit afraid of horses, according to Alene Alexander, who took care of his horses at Graceland for years. It was because of an incident during the filming of his movie *Flaming Star* when a horse ran away from the set, carrying Elvis. But his future wife, **Priscilla**, loved horses and wanted one when she moved to Graceland, so he bought her a black quarter horse named Domino. "After he saw Priscilla ride," Alexander told *Cowboys & Indians* magazine, "he became interested in owning a horse." So he went on a long search for a horse for himself and found a golden palomino he named Rising Sun. Elvis would ride Rising Sun and walk with him as often as he could. Elvis loved being with horses so much that eventually his stable grew to include 18 of them.



2: WHAT SPORT DID ELVIS BUILD A COURT FOR IN GRACELAND?

In the early 1970s, racquetball became very popular in the United States. Elvis was first introduced to it in 1973. He played his first game in November of that year, and became such a fan that he started playing it regularly around Memphis, particularly at the local YMCA and at Memphis State University. He played mostly in secret, to avoid being photographed while playing. This kept Elvis out of local tournaments, too. But Elvis loved the sport so much that in the summer of 1975 he built his own **racquetball** court at Graceland.

3: TRUE OR FALSE: ELVIS WAS A STAR ON HIS HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM.

Elvis would've loved for the answer to be true, but alas, it is **false**. Elvis' mother didn't allow him to play high school football, but he desperately wanted to try out. Instead, he played at a local park in a regular pickup game every Sunday with his friends. He continued playing football as often as he could throughout his life. He would organize games and play on the Graceland grounds, in the Army (he once won an MVP trophy for his play at his base in Germany) and during breaks on movie sets.



4.

TRUE OR FALSE: ELVIS LOVED READING.

True. Elvis was a big reader and a collector of books. There is a huge library filled with well-worn books at his Graceland mansion, many of which include notes he would make on the pages as he read them. He even had several books shipped along with him so he could read while he was on tour or on a movie set. His collection included a large variety of topics, but he had many versions of the Bible and many other books about religion. He also enjoyed reading about American history, books on World War I and II, and books about sports—particularly football and karate.

BOOKWORM

Graceland featured a large library as Elvis was an avid reader and collector of books. He enjoyed reading about religion, politics, history and sports.

HIS HOBBIES

BIG COLLECTION

As a big supporter of law enforcement, Elvis began collecting police badges in 1957.



5:

ELVIS' SUPPORT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT LED HIM TO WHAT HOBBY?

Before Elvis dreamed of being a singer, he dreamed of being a cop. That led to a lifelong support of law enforcement. He became close with several police officers—many of whom were charged with guarding him or his family. He even became an honorary police captain in both Memphis and Denver. Along the way, he began **collecting law enforcement badges**—starting with a “Special Officer” badge from the city of Memphis, which he got as a gift from a girl at a roller rink in 1957. He pursued badges from any law enforcement department he could find, including the United States Drug Enforcement Agency. And he tried to collect them from every city he visited on tour.

6:

**TRUE OR FALSE:
ELVIS NEVER
LEARNED HOW
TO ROLLER
SKATE.**

Definitely **false**. He was a strong skater from a young age. Long before he became the King of Rock 'n' Roll, he was a frequent visitor to the Rainbow Rollerdrome at the Rainbow Lake entertainment complex in Memphis. He would often go with his friends and his then-girlfriend, Dixie Locke. Later, after he became a big enough star that he couldn't really go out in public without attracting a crowd, Elvis would rent out the entire facility for all-night parties and roller "wars"—essentially games of football on skates.





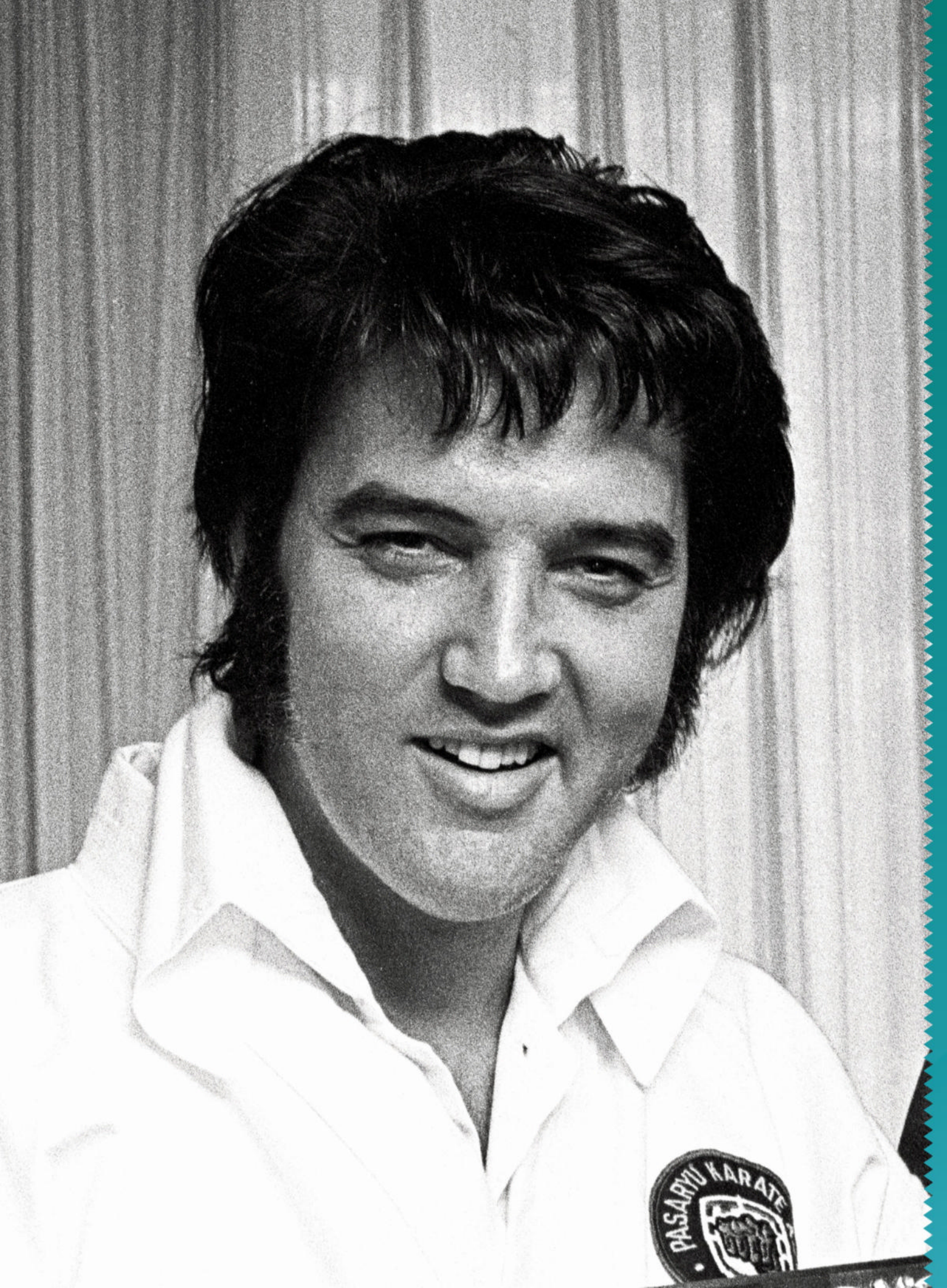
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WHAT DID ELVIS GIVE TO PRESIDENT NIXON IN 1970?

Elvis showed up at the White House on Dec. 21, 1970, with a hand-written letter for President Richard Nixon and asked for a meeting. Elvis' goal was to add to his badge collection—one from the Federal Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs. Nixon, in hopes of appealing to America's youth, welcomed Elvis in for a photo-op. But when Elvis showed up at the front gate, Secret Service stopped him because he was armed. He brought a **Colt .45 pistol** with him, to give to Nixon as a gift. It was a special, World War II commemorative gun that Elvis had hanging on his wall at home. The gun was eventually hung on the wall at Nixon's presidential library.

BADGE COLLECTOR

Elvis added a badge from the Federal Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs for his collection during a visit with President Richard Nixon in 1970.



8.

WHAT WAS ELVIS' KARATE NICKNAME?

Elvis' love of karate was legendary. In the 1970s, he studied under Master Kang Rhee in Memphis, who was recommended by one of his former instructors. All of Master Rhee's students had to choose an animal name, which would be how they were addressed during training. Elvis first chose Mr. Panther, but eventually switched to **Mr. Tiger**. He became "Mr. Tiger" to everyone in his karate dojo. The name "Tiger" was even embroidered onto Elvis' specially designed black belt. It's unclear why Elvis chose "Tiger," but he did sing "Tiger Man" during his 1968 TV comeback special.

KARATE ENTHUSIAST

Elvis received his first-degree black belt in 1960. After training in Memphis under Master Kang Rhee, Elvis eventually earned his eighth-degree black belt in 1974.

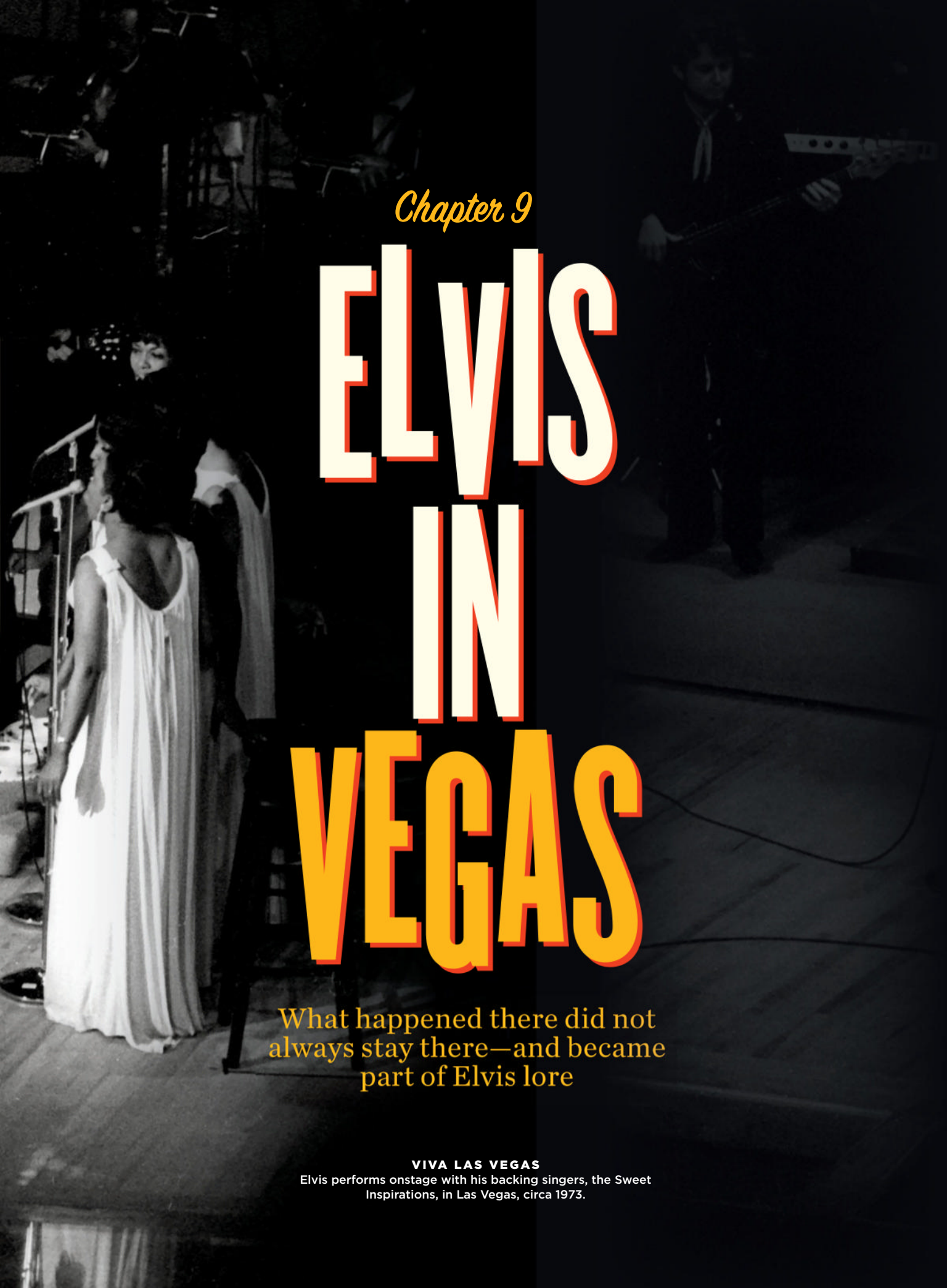


9.

WHAT IS THE "ZIPPIN PIPPIN"?

Elvis loved riding roller coasters. And his favorite was the "Zippin Pippin," **one of the oldest wooden roller coasters in the United States** which was the star attraction at Libertyland in Memphis. The coaster featured 740 feet of track and rose 63 feet in the air. Elvis loved it so much that he would rent the entire park out so he and his friends could ride it for hours—including an evening just eight days before he died. Libertyland closed in 2005, but the rights to the coaster were acquired by Bay Beach amusement park in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and it was rebuilt there in 2011.





Chapter 9

ELVIS IN VEGAS

What happened there did not
always stay there—and became
part of Elvis lore

VIVA LAS VEGAS

Elvis performs onstage with his backing singers, the Sweet Inspirations, in Las Vegas, circa 1973.

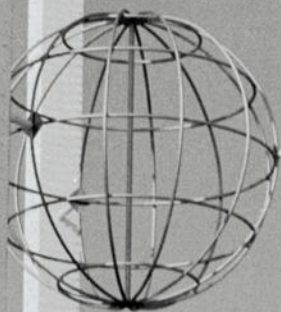
1. HOW MUCH DID A TICKET TO SEE ELVIS IN LAS VEGAS COST?

The face-value ticket price for one of Elvis' concerts at the International Hotel in Las Vegas began at **\$15.00**. At the time, that was near the top of the scale for concert tickets in the city. Fans who bought a ticket for the dinner show during his first month-long residency also got a roast sirloin. And if they were considered a VIP—and many of them were, since celebrities flocked to see Elvis back in action—they received even more. The VIP “welcome gift box” included two Elvis albums, a calendar, two 8-by-10 photos and a brochure of Elvis records and tapes. Elvis' shows usually lasted about an hour and 15 minutes.

VIP STATUS

From July 31 through Aug. 28, 1969, Elvis performed 57 shows at the International Hotel in Las Vegas.





INTERNATIONAL

BILL MILLER PRESENTS

ELVIS

SAMMY SHORE
THE IMPERIALS

SWEET INSPIRATIONS
BOBBY MORRIS ORCHESTRA

EXCITING

THE SKY-HIGH CROWN ROOM OPENS SOON

COMING SOON
LAS VEGAS' FIRST
LEGITIMATE
THEATRE

INTERN

THEATRE

2:

TRUE OR FALSE: ELVIS WAS THE FIRST PERSON TO PERFORM AT THE INTERNATIONAL.

False. He could have been the opening act, but Colonel Tom Parker said no. He was worried about technical glitches and wanted another act to test out the showroom. Instead, Barbra Streisand completed a string of concerts as the first headline performer at the hotel. She actually opened the hotel's showroom on July 1, 1969—one day before the official opening of the hotel, in a performance for only hotel employees. She then performed one public show on opening night and another the next night, before doing two per night right up until Elvis took over on July 31, 1969.



HOW LONG WAS ELVIS' FIRST CONCERT RESIDENCY IN LAS VEGAS?

In April 1956, Elvis began the first Las Vegas residency of his career, but it was a short one and he didn't even get top billing for the show. He was booked for a **two-week run** at the New Frontier hotel and casino, where he played the Venus Room. The star attraction was Freddy Martin and his orchestra, and another featured performer was comedian Shecky Greene. Elvis was actually billed as an "extra added attraction." His performances were not well-received at all. Writing a review in the *Las Vegas Sun*, Bill Willard called him "a bore."

OPENING ACT

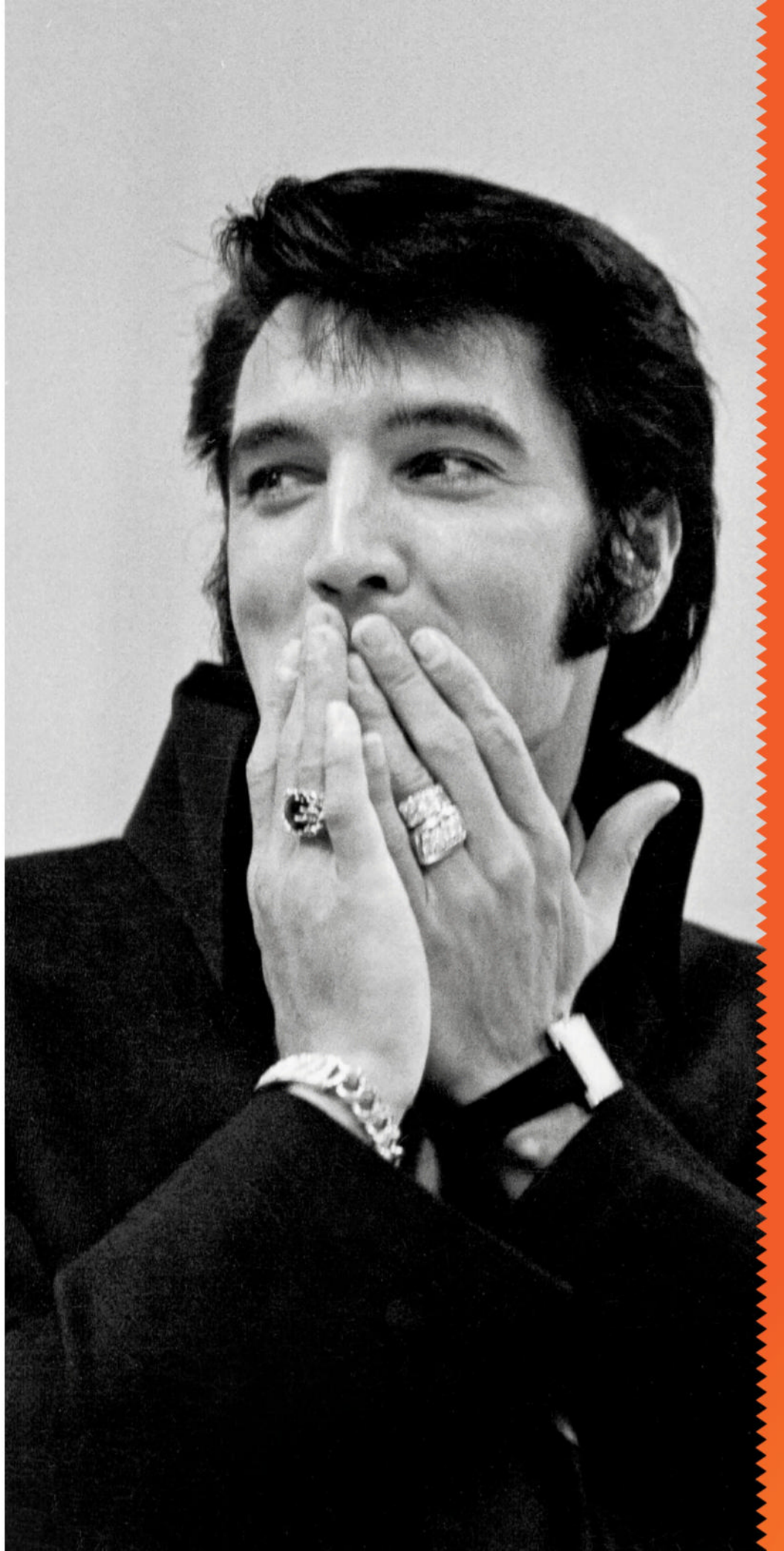
Barbra Streisand was hired to perform a string of concerts as the first headlining performer at the International Hotel in Las Vegas.

4: WHO WAS “THE MAN WHO DRESSED THE KING”?

Bill Belew was already a successful costume designer when he was brought in to help dress Elvis for his 1968 TV comeback special. His outfits were a hit in that show, but it was the outfits that Belew designed for Elvis to wear during his residency in Vegas that earned him the title of “the man who dressed the King.” Elvis wanted something that was comfortable and allowed him to move around freely. Belew came up with a design he called the Cossack Suit. “I wanted the clothes to be easy and seductive,” he said in an interview in 1999. Over time, this evolved into richly flamboyant jumpsuits—bedazzled with jewels, flowing capes and enormous belts. In short, it’s the look everyone associates with Elvis (and a few others able to pull it off) in the 1970s.

5: TRUE OR FALSE: ELVIS WAS BACKED UP BY HIS ORIGINAL BAND IN VEGAS.

False. Elvis did ask drummer D.C. Fontana, guitarist Scotty Moore and the backup singers the Jordanaires to join him in his residency at the International Hotel, but they declined out of concern for losing their regular income as studio musicians. So Elvis put together a new, five-person band to accompany him at his shows. The group was called The TCB Band—TCB stood for “Taking Care of Business”—and featured legendary lead guitarist James Burton, two backup vocal groups—the Sweet Inspirations and the Imperials—and an orchestra.



6: HOW MANY CONSECU- TIVE SOLD- OUT SHOWS DID ELVIS PLAY AT THE HOTEL?

The residency deal was booked for 57 shows over four weeks, beginning on July 31, 1969. That was two shows a night—one at 8 p.m. and another at midnight. The opening night show was such a success, however, that the next day Colonel Tom Parker and Alex Shoofey, the hotel president, met in the coffee shop and negotiated a new deal that called for Elvis to play two month-long residencies at the hotel every year for the next five years. By the end of what turned out to be a seven-year run at the hotel, Elvis had played **636 sold-out shows**.

MAX CAPACITY

During Elvis' seven-year run at the International Hotel in Las Vegas, he performed more than 600 sold-out shows.

HIS RESIDENCY

Elvis (below) performs onstage during his initial residency at the International Hotel in 1969.

ELVIS
IN
VEGAS

7:

HOW MUCH DID ELVIS' LAS VEGAS RESIDENCY MAKE IN TOTAL TICKET SALES?

Elvis' contract called for him to be paid \$100,000 per week over four weeks and 57 shows. After Elvis' successful debut show, Parker renegotiated a five-year deal for two four-week residencies every year, with a salary bump to \$125,000 per week. It was worth it for the hotel, since the gross ticket receipts for his first residency were reported to be worth \$1.5 million. His entire seven-year run at the hotel reportedly drew 2.5 million people and consisted of 636 consecutive sold-out shows. That's an estimated **\$43.7 million** in ticket sales—and it doesn't even account for any gambling revenue.



8: ON WHAT FLOOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL HOTEL DID ELVIS LIVE DURING HIS POST- COMEBACK SPECIAL RESIDENCY?

After his 1968 TV comeback special, Elvis was very much in demand. He and his manager, Colonel Tom Parker, settled on a blockbuster deal with the brand-new International Hotel in Las Vegas, which included a 2,200-seat showroom. As part of his deal, Elvis lived in the 5,000-square foot Imperial Suite on the **30th floor** of what was Nevada's tallest building. The suite was renamed the Elvis Presley Suite after his death in 1977.

HOW HIGH DID ELVIS' SONG "VIVA LAS VEGAS" CLIMB ON THE BILLBOARD CHARTS?

Elvis recorded "Viva Las Vegas" in 1964. It was written for the movie of the same name, and it only reached **No. 29** on the Billboard Hot 100. Though it would go on to become one of Elvis' signature songs, he left it off the 75-minute set list for his opening night performance at the International Hotel in Las Vegas. In fact, Elvis never sang it live onstage in Las Vegas—or anywhere else in concert.

VIVA THE KING

Elvis Presley and Ann-Margret filming a scene from the 1963 film *Viva Las Vegas*.





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